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Key Findings:

- The City of Springfield recently filled its recycling coordinator position. Sangamon County has a vacant recycling coordinator position.
- The City and County each receive landfill tipping fees and host agreement revenues, a portion of which are intended to fund recycling programs.
- Increased coordination and communication would benefit the County in meeting its statutory requirements concerning recycling.
- The CEC recommends that the City of Springfield and Sangamon County strengthen existing communication related to recycling and solid waste management, reestablish the recycling advisory committee, update the County's solid waste management plan, and coordinate personnel and efforts for recycling functions via a management agreement. The CEC further recommends that the City and County pursue long-term visioning and strategy development for waste reduction and future coordination of waste management efforts.

The Citizens' Efficiency Commission

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Citizens' Efficiency Commission Recommendation:

Increase Coordination for City and County Recycling Personnel and Programs

Introduction

This report represents a formal recommendation by the Citizens' Efficiency Commission. All information has been compiled, researched, and validated by the CEC and its volunteers. The Commission expresses its hope that relevant local leaders will review the recommendation and take strides toward its implementation.

In light of the research presented below, the CEC recommends that the City of Springfield and Sangamon County strengthen existing communication related to recycling and solid waste management, reestablish the recycling advisory committee, update the County's solid waste management plan, and coordinate personnel and efforts for recycling functions via a management agreement. The CEC further recommends that the City and County pursue long-term visioning and strategy development for waste reduction and future coordination of waste management efforts.

The Commission stands ready to provide assistance to the greatest extent possible in the review and implementation process. The CEC may be interested in further review of efficiency considerations that develop based on this advisory report, or of other recommendations that may arise.

Background

In fall of 2011, County Board member Greg Stumpf, who chairs the Solid Waste Management and Planning Committee, submitted a letter to the CEC. In this letter, he informed the CEC that the County's recycling coordinator position had been vacant for some time, indicated that the County Board wished to augment efficiencies as possible through increased coordination with the City of Springfield, and requested the CEC's assistance in examining this question.

The CEC expressed formal support for its Public Works Committee to continue pursuing the finding at its February 2012 meeting. The CEC spent substantial time formulating an overview of solid waste management functions in the county through interviews with Mr. Stumpf, County Director of Public Health James Stone, City Director of Public Works Mark Mahoney, and former City Recycling Coordinator Wynne Coplea. After this period of information-gathering, the CEC's Public Works Committee determined that it would facilitate a meeting between the City and the County to see what arrangement could be developed. The Committee noted that waste management functions

may merit further review in the future, particularly in the areas of source reduction and duplication of waste hauling efforts.

Recommendation Questions

In pursuing its research, the CEC found it necessary to define and articulate the question(s) at hand in the area of recycling services in Sangamon County.

- How are solid waste management and recycling currently handled in both the City of Springfield and Sangamon County?
- What are the statutory requirements for each entity related to these functions?
- What agreement might the City and County reach that optimizes recycling functions for each and provides incentives to work with one another?

Brief Overview of Existing Services

Personnel

The City of Springfield and Sangamon County each have a Recycling Coordinator position. The County's position, housed in the Department of Public Health, has been vacant since 2011. The position first experienced a cut-back in hours in 2009. The County did not indicate any immediate plans to fill the position in conversations with the CEC throughout early 2012. The County also has a number of Public Health employees (eight environmental health inspectors as of September 2013), a portion of whose time is dedicated to landfill inspections, random dump inspections, and other duties, and funded from landfill host agreements. The City's Recycling Coordinator position, one full-time employee housed in the Public Works Department, cost the City approximately \$75,000 in salary and fringe benefits in 2011. The City's position became vacant in early 2012, but was filled during summer 2012.¹

Waste Facilities

Waste in Sangamon County can be taken to the Sangamon Valley Landfill, the Bearcat Transfer Station, or a recycling location such as Lake Area Disposal. The Bearcat Station hauls waste to Taylorville in Christian County when it is disposed of in that location. Waste taken to the Sangamon Valley Landfill generates tipping fees for the City of Springfield and Sangamon County, based on a host agreement with Allied Waste/Republic.

Waste Haulers

Private companies that haul waste within the City of Springfield include Allied Waste, Waste Management, Illini Disposal, and Lake Area Disposal. Allied Waste hauls waste exclusively to the Sangamon Valley Landfill, whereas Waste Management and Lake Area Recycling haul to the Bearcat Transfer station. There are also other private haulers in Sangamon County, such as Cleeton Sanitation Service.

¹ CEC Interview with Mark Mahoney, Director of Public Works, City of Springfield (June 28, 2012).

Recycling Efforts

As of December 2012, the City of Springfield provided curbside recycling pickup for single-family and duplex residences at no extra charge beyond the \$0.50 monthly fee included in the weekly trash pickup rates of \$11.75 per month for one can and \$14.25 per month for two cans. Waste haulers bill these fees directly to residents in single-family and duplex housing, which allows them access to Springfield "blue bin" curbside recycling.² This arrangement changed as of January 2013, at which time the recycling fee increased to \$1.50 per month, adding an additional dollar to pickup rates. The City of Springfield also voted to being collecting the fee directly, rather than through waste haulers, at this time.³

For those who do not receive curbside recycling pick-up in Springfield, recycling may be available for a fee from their private waste hauler. Also, Lake Area Recycling Services accepts recyclable materials free of charge at its 24-hour drop-off facility.

Cities and villages aside from the City of Springfield have various agreements and methods for waste management and recycling. In the unincorporated county, no standard recycling process exists. Sangamon County has historically offered rotating recycling drop-off locations, but these drop-offs have been unavailable in recent years due to funding constraints. Some townships and municipalities in the unincorporated county provide recycling services.

The City and County have historically provided hazardous waste collections and other special recycling opportunities intermittently, depending upon availability of funding and grant assistance. The City and County have cosponsored an annual household hazardous waste collection and tire collection in previous years. However, the number of hazardous waste collections declined following the economic downturn in 2008.

In addition to these public and private sector entities, the CEC notes that a number of non-profit groups engage in recycling and promotion activities, such as Habitat for Humanity for Sangamon County and Springfield's Green Business Alliance. Others take part in electronics recycling, such as BLH, Midwest Computer Recycling, and Vintage Technology.

Statutory Requirements

The Illinois General Assembly, in the Illinois Solid Waste Planning and Recycling Act (415 ILCS 15), finds that county governments in Illinois have primary responsibility to plan for waste management facilities and programs within their boundaries. Pursuant to the Act, county governments such as Sangamon County are responsible for submitting a waste management plan for municipal waste generated within their boundaries. The plan must be updated every 5 years and contain, at minimum:

- A description of the origin, content, and weight/volume of waste generated and an assessment of variables affecting estimates of these figures in the next 20 years

² City of Springfield, "Waste and Recycling," <http://www.springfield.il.us/recycle.htm>, accessed October 2012.

³ Stroisch, Deana. December 18, 2012. "Springfield City Council OKs increase in recycling fee." *The State Journal-Register*.

- A description of facilities where municipal waste is being disposed of and their remaining capacities, as well as proposed facilities and programs within the next 20 years
- Environmental, energy, life cycle cost, and economic advantage/disadvantage analyses of proposed facilities and programs
- Descriptions of the time schedule for facility and program development and operation
- Identities of sites or criteria for site selection related to waste management facilities
- The government jurisdictions responsible for implementing the plan

The county is also responsible for forming an advisory committee that includes representatives from municipalities, citizen groups, the waste management industry, local recyclers, other industries, and any additional appropriate representatives.

The waste management plan should also include a recycling plan. The recycling plan should provide for a designated recycling coordinator, include steps for implementation, and have recycling rate goals in keeping with statute. Statute gives specific recycling provisions related to recycling centers, separating recyclables, composting leaves, public education, and identifying markets for recyclable materials.

Finally, the Act allows for a county to delegate to a municipality or Municipal Joint Action Agency the power to prepare the plan. It also allows for intergovernmental agreements by which the county may jointly create and administer plans with other bodies. The county may also enter written agreements for a municipality or waste transporter to take on responsibility for implementation of its waste management and/or recycling plan.

Existing Solid Waste Management Planning

The County submitted its first Solid Waste Plan to IEPA in 1991, with goals of 15% recycling by 1995 and 25% by 1997. Sangamon County exceeded those goals, and the Solid Waste Plan was updated in 1996 and 2001. The most recent Solid Waste Management Plan update for Sangamon County occurred in 2006. The plan is available as an appendix.

Solid Waste History⁴

In April of 1991, Sangamon County passed an ordinance that established a tipping fee on waste deposited at the Sangamon Valley Landfill. The County used a portion of its funding to successfully seek and win a solid waste enforcement grant from the IEPA, hire a recycling coordinator; and to grant funds for recycling programs in Sangamon County. In 1992, the County formed the Community Advisory Committee for recycling, and over the next two years, it developed local recycling programs and Household Hazardous Waste collections, also using tipping fee revenues.

In 1994, with the closure of the solid waste facility of the Sangamon Valley Landfill under the management of E.S.G. Watts, Sangamon County became reliant on the Springfield Bearcat Transfer Station for receipt of local waste and funding for solid waste and

⁴ Personal communication from James Stone, Sangamon County Director of Public Health, and Greg Stumpf, Sangamon County Board (January 11, 2012).

recycling programs. The Bearcat facility sorted recyclables, and transferred waste to a facility in Taylorville. Waste Management, Inc., the parent company of the Bearcat Transfer Station, at this time voluntarily entered into an agreement with Sangamon County to assist with funding for solid waste and recycling programs, providing approximately \$180,000 annually to the county. Revenue generated from the alternative funding in this agreement produced two-thirds of the revenue that had been generated by tipping fee. Grants to villages in Sangamon County were capped at a total of \$16,000, and some additional revenue was used to continue Household Hazardous Waste collections every other year through 2002.

In 2002, Allied Waste, Inc. purchased the Sangamon Valley Landfill. The County, with the assistance of the City and Springfield Township, established a host agreement with Allied Waste in April 2002 as permitted under ILCS 415 ILCS 5/39.2(e). As a result of this host agreement, local revenues were re-established to support solid waste and recycling activities based on waste deposited at the Sangamon Valley Landfill. Provisions in the host agreement included: funding for connection to public water for 86 properties in Springfield Township that are near the Sangamon Valley Landfill, free disposal for these residents, improvement of Sandhill Road from Peoria Road to the entrance of the landfill, and 8,000 tons of free disposal annually to Sangamon County. The free disposal is divided with 5,000 tons to the City of Springfield, 2,000 tons to Sangamon County, and 1,000 tons to Springfield Township. Allied Waste paid for the estimated cost of the improvements to Sandhill Road and public water connections, which came to approximately \$790,000. Sangamon County paid the remainder of the costs over this estimate (up to approximately \$1 million), using a portion of tipping fees received annually, which was also part of the negotiated host agreement. Sangamon County received a host fee of \$2.54 per ton at the beginning of the host agreement period that has increased with the CPI each year since.

In November of 2009, economic decline, declining host fee payments, and property tax caps led to a suspension of funding for County recycling programs. The County also reduced its part-time recycling position to one day per week.

Revenues Related to Solid Waste Management

As of early 2012, the County generates revenues related to solid waste management and recycling in the following ways:⁵

- 2,000 tons of free dumping, with tipping fee savings of approximately \$49 per ton, resulting in approximate savings value of **\$98,000**.
- Host agreement tipping fee of \$2.45 per ton, generating approximately \$410,000 annually. Of this revenue, an average of **\$250,000** is dedicated to county expenses annually, on a formula basis.
- The remaining ~\$160,000 annually is split 50-50 with the City, resulting in ~**\$80,000** annually to County.

⁵ Revenue documentation, entitled "Host Fee History" provided in personal communication from James Stone, Sangamon County Director of Public Health (August 1, 2012). These figures represent multi-year averages to account for year-to-year fluctuation. In 2013, total revenues are estimated to be approximately \$385,000, with approximately \$300,000 of this figure intended to cover Department of Public Health costs and \$85,000 remaining for the City-County revenue sharing formula.

As of early 2012, the City of Springfield generates revenues related to solid waste management and recycling in the following ways:

- 5,000 tons of free dumping, with tipping fee savings of approximately \$49 per ton, resulting in approximate savings value of **\$245,000**.
- **\$80,000** annually from tipping fees split with County (see above).
- Independent host agreement between City and Allied Waste generating approximately **\$20,000** in payments to City.
- \$0.50 recycling charge on waste collection bills within City, resulting in an annual total of approximately \$150,000.

In actuality, the County incurs over \$600,000 in expenditures for inspecting and overseeing operation of the Allied Waste/Republic Landfill, according to a Maximus, Inc. study conducted in 2008.⁶ However, the County allots under \$300,000 of its tipping fee-generated revenues annually to alleviate these costs, before splitting remaining revenues with the City.

Local officials indicated that revenues generated by the landfill host agreements are used for a variety of purposes, and are not intended solely for recycling efforts. In total, after the allotment for landfill expenses, the County receives an annual average of approximately \$60,000, and the City an annual average of \$80,000. The City also receives the ~\$150,000 generated by the recycling charge on waste collection bills. The City's expenses related to waste management appear only to be those associated with the recycling coordinator's salary, as described above,⁷

Alternatives

As in all of its advisory recommendations, the CEC considers its alternatives in view of the available information and the likelihood of the recommendation's implementation. For the implementation of a recommendation related to recycling, current funding structures and City/County budgets play a role in the CEC's considerations.

The CEC therefore met with representatives from Sangamon County and the City of Springfield on multiple occasions to cultivate an understanding of each jurisdiction's capacity and willingness to participate in the efficiency discussion surrounding solid waste management. In these discussions, it became clear that it would be of benefit for the region to have more coordinated City-County efforts toward both recycling and waste management functions in the county more broadly.

However, the CEC could not develop a clear understanding of the two jurisdictions' policy preferences involving their respective recycling coordinator positions. A general sentiment that more cooperation would be beneficial exists. Alternatives to improve this cooperation could include a single jointly-funded position, two coordinators with increased institutional interaction and capacity to communicate, intergovernmental agreements related to joint management of recycling, etc. Without this understanding

⁶ Maximus, Inc. 2008. Health Department User Fee Cost Study for Sangamon County, IL.

⁷ City of Springfield, FY 2013 Budget document, <http://www.springfield.il.us/FY13%20Budget/Index.htm>, accessed November 2012.

and greater decision-making capacity, the CEC determined that it was beyond its scope determine the appropriate location for a combined position or clarify which body would have decision-making capacity over recycling in the City and outlying County.

Recommendation

In light of this research, the CEC recommends that the City of Springfield and Sangamon County strengthen existing communication related to recycling and solid waste management, re-envision and reestablish the recycling advisory committee, update the County's solid waste management plan, and coordinate personnel and efforts for recycling functions via a management agreement. The CEC further recommends that the City and County pursue long-term visioning and strategy development for waste reduction and future coordination of waste management efforts.

The benefits of implementing this recommendation include:

- Increased communication via a shared position or joint management;
- Streamlined recycling functions county-wide;
- Improved functioning of a re-envisioned recycling advisory committee by including community partners in non-profit and private sectors in addition to regional municipal participants;
- Compliance with state statute related to recycling planning and implementation management, per 45 ILCS 15;
- Potential elimination of redundancies created by having two recycling coordinator positions; and
- Open communication that would lead to easier performance measurement and update of the solid waste management plan.

Cost reduction estimates related to these benefits depend upon the involved jurisdictions' respective willingness to implement increased communication and coordination. The structure of a management agreement linking recycling coordinator functions in the two jurisdictions would determine the final cost savings, potentially based on the reduction of one of the recycling coordinator positions.

Steps Toward Implementation

In order to implement its recommendation, the CEC recommends the following course of action:

- Determine funding levels that the City and County are each willing to dedicate toward recycling programs and recycling personnel.
- Evaluate the most beneficial use of this funding for a coordinated county-wide recycling effort.
- Establish an intergovernmental or management agreement that delineates responsibility and authority for recycling functions within the city and in rural Sangamon County.
- Appoint members to the recycling advisory committee per statutory requirements. Consider including non-profit and private community partners as part of the recycling advisory committee.



- Establish preliminary goals for this recycling advisory committee, including encouraging target waste management and recycling efforts through the newly established Regional Leadership Council.
- Determine responsible entity/entities for updating Solid Waste Management and Recycling Plan.
- Update plan in accordance with local goals.

The Citizens' Efficiency Commission offers its support for these implementation efforts. If the CEC can provide any further assistance in facilitating efforts toward cooperation, it would be pleased to do so.

The CEC notes as well that current best practices in solid waste management and recycling tend to emphasize waste reduction. Although beyond the scope of its current recommendation, the CEC would like to recognize source reduction efforts, such as a "zero waste" policy, as key components of a complete solid waste efficiency effort. By reducing wasted materials, citizens and local governments could create increased efficiencies on the "input" side of local government functions. While the current recommendation represents a necessary component in working toward these efforts, the CEC emphasizes that it is only an intermediate step in pursuit of a long-term, over-arching waste management vision for the region.

Respectfully submitted,

Hon. Karen Hasara, Chair
on behalf of the
Citizens' Efficiency Commission
for Sangamon County